



Community Impact Grant Program Handbook

Grants Programs and Initiatives **Effective: July 1, 2026**

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1 Program Description

The **Virginia Housing Community Impact Program** facilitates projects supporting affordable housing production and preservation. This program is divided into multiple components.

Agencies seeking funding should review Virginia Housing's Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) located in the Grants Management System (GMS) at <https://vhdagrants.com/>. For questions concerning these programs or assistance with applications, contact **Matthew Bolster, Strategic Housing Officer**, at (804) 343-5631 or Matthew.Bolster@virginiahousing.com.

1.1 Overview of Funding Opportunity

Community Impact planning grants support activities preliminary to affordable housing production and preservation in communities. Grantees shall work with consultants of their choosing to develop the applicable deliverables.

Market Analysis funding helps eligible grantees within the housing network work through a policy initiative or the conceptual planning stages of a project. Funding supports research and analysis providing planners and developers with the information they need to make important decisions concerning affordable housing. Multi-Cultural Materials supplemental funding is available for the translation of land use documents into languages other than English, helping to make the planning or development process more accessible to all residents within a locality.

Community Engagement supports efforts to involve citizens in a planning or communications project geared toward the encouragement or implementation of affordable housing development. This category may also be used for **Innovation Planning Grants**.

Community Impact development grants support the revitalization of communities by helping to transform vacant, blighted buildings into affordable housing opportunities.

The **Stabilization Program** focuses on critical repairs necessary to preserve a building for later full rehabilitation into housing units. Examples include, but are not limited to roof repair or replacement, structural repairs, building systems improvements, fencing to secure property, and hardscape improvements.

The **Deconstruction Program** focuses on dismantling buildings in revitalization areas to make way for affordable housing development. The goal is to help revitalize communities by eliminating blight and replacing it with multiple units of affordable housing, while maximizing the reuse potential of the original building's components. Qualifying structures are those blighted or abandoned structures that inhibit public safety and are deemed infeasible for rehabilitation. Deconstruction must lead to site availability for housing development purposes. Where possible, building components must be salvaged for reuse and/or recycling.

The **Innovation Program** supports projects that utilize newly available technologies and techniques to produce housing or improve the provision of housing-related services. Projects are intended to introduce repeatable approaches that have the potential to result in cost savings or significant performance improvements over existing methods.

1.2 Eligibility Guidelines

To be eligible for funds under the Community Impact Grant program, organizations must:

- Be either:
 - A nonprofit organization that has received a 501(c)3 or other designation of nonprofit status from the IRS,
 - A general unit of local government, or
 - A quasi-governmental entity.
- Be physically located in Virginia.
- Have at minimum three (3) years of operations.
- Carry out at least one of the following housing-related focuses:
 - Creating economically integrated and inclusive housing opportunities including housing options for people with disabilities.
 - Planning and Community Development to include significant attention to housing planning.
 - Providing services and/or educational opportunities to further affordable housing.
- Align with Virginia Housing's mission of *Helping Virginians Attain Quality, Affordable Housing* and align with Virginia Housing's Strategic Direction.

All awards are based on the organization's capacity, alignment of the project with Virginia Housing's mission, and availability of Virginia Housing funding.

1.3 Application Process

All applications must be submitted electronically using the Virginia Housing Grants Management System (GMS) at <https://vhdagrants.com/>. Applications submitted beyond the end date of a Virginia Housing NOFO will not be accepted.

1.3.1 Rolling Application Review

Market Analysis, Community Engagement, and Stabilization and Deconstruction applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Rolling applications may be submitted at any time during the period(s) the Funding Opportunity is open. Two application rounds will be offered; however, applications are reviewed at the time they are submitted. The anticipated rounds are from July 1 – October 31 and from January 1 – April 30. Dates are subject to change.

If a rolling application is determined to be incomplete, Virginia Housing may elect to return a portion of an application **one time** for the applicant to make corrections or additions. The applicant will be provided with instructions and given up to 15 calendar days to make the changes and resubmit the application.

If the application is not resubmitted within 15 days, it will be withdrawn. If the resubmitted application is still incomplete or otherwise ineligible for funding, the application will be denied. Applicants may reapply for the same project at any time, as long as the funding opportunity is open.

Applicants of denied applications are encouraged to discuss their application and projects with Virginia Housing before submitting another application for the project. Applications will be evaluated as submitted.

Virginia Housing may elect to cancel or shorten the anticipated rounds of funding if the year's allocation has been or is nearly all awarded. Applications received at the end of an application cycle may be withdrawn without review if no funds remain for the program year.

1.3.2 Competitive Application Review

Community Impact Innovation grants are funded under a competitive round. Competitive applications will be reviewed for minimum eligibility requirements and denied if the application is not eligible. Eligible applications will be scored by the review team based on the established scoring criteria. All applications will be reviewed based on what is included in the application submitted. Competitive funding opportunities are not necessarily offered annually.

1.3.3 Approval

Funds will be awarded based on an assessment of the organization's application and the availability of Virginia Housing funds.

The selected organization will receive a Grant Award Notification (GAN) and a Grant Agreement if approved for funds under the award. The organization must return the Grant Agreement to Virginia Housing with signature by an authorized representative.

Approval may take up to sixty (60) days for rolling applications. Competitive application approval will be based upon the scoring process timeline, which will be released with the NOFO.

1.3.4 Denial

Organizations that are not approved for funds will receive written communication from Virginia Housing explaining the denial of grant funds.

1.4 Restrictions

- Funds may not be used to pay for any expenses incurred prior to receiving the grant award and executing a contract with Virginia Housing.

- Receipt of a Virginia Housing grant offer in no way implies that the applicant or applicable project(s) will receive Virginia Housing financing or receive preferential treatment in any application for financing.
- Emerging organizations are not eligible. (Emerging is defined as being in existence less than three years and/or not having an engaged board, staff, or community; or not being fiscally sound).
- Funds may not be used to pay for activities currently funded by another funding source.
- Consultants receiving funds under this grant may not be an employee, contract employee, or board member of the organization during the term of the grant. If the consultant has an existing or prior contractual or voluntary relationship with the organization, the organization must document a fair and transparent procurement process and clearly demonstrate that the grant-funded services are distinct in scope, deliverables, and compensation from any existing agreement.
- Grant funds may not be used to pay for services already covered under another contract, and failure to clearly document this separation may result in disallowed costs.
- Applicants with an existing or previous Virginia Housing grant must not have any outstanding compliance issue(s) or issues resulting in funds withheld within the twelve (12) months before application submission.

1.5 Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”)

Virginia Housing is subject to and will, at all times, comply with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”). Virginia Housing will endeavor to protect from disclosure any financial information of the Applicant which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

1.6 Conflict of Interest

No officer or employee of an applicant or awarded organization shall have a personal interest in a contract with that organization of which he/she is an officer or employee.

2 Community Impact Market Analysis

The Market Analysis Community Impact Grant helps non-profit organizations and local governments within the housing network complete research and planning tasks such as an area assessment, policy examination, or feasibility analysis of a particular project.

Awards are based on an organization's capacity; board, staff, and community engagement; quality and appropriateness of research design, and the availability of Virginia Housing funding.

Market Analysis requests are eligible to receive up to **\$20,000** per study, unless otherwise noted. Applicants may request multiple studies in a single request, provided the studies relate to one another and will be completed within the timeframe of the grant.

2.1 Market Analysis Project Types

Requests for funds under the Market Analysis Community Impact Grant must fall within one of the following project types. Virginia Housing reserves the right to reject funding requested for any applications that are outside the focus areas listed below:

2.1.1 Area Planning

Area Planning projects help create a housing-focused vision for the development of a clearly defined area. Affordable housing must be incorporated into the planning for the request to be eligible.

Subcategories of Area Planning projects include:

- **Historical Study** to determine whether a structure or district is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Virginia Landmarks Register. This study researches the historical and architectural significance of an individual building or a series of buildings in a defined area. The intention of the study must be to qualify buildings for federal and/or state historic rehabilitation tax credits.
- **Expert Reports** from an outside team of volunteer planners or other development experts setting forth recommendations for the broader development of a small area surrounding proposed affordable housing development. This should result in an abbreviated small area plan. This plan must attempt to integrate affordable housing with its environments by promoting linkages with existing development and growth of a cohesive community setting over time. Examples are the Community Planning and Assistance Teams (CPAT) under the auspices of the American Planning Association (APA) Virginia Chapter and Technical Assistance Panels (TAP) under the Urban Land Institute (ULI) chapters serving Virginia.
- **Small Area Plan** for the future development of a defined subarea of a locality, emphasizing affordable housing, including (at a minimum) analysis of existing conditions; goals, objectives, and policies; and a future land use map. This plan must set forth an agreed-upon vision for

the development of an area. The long-term goal is to make the plan a matter of public policy by the local governing body's adoption as part of its comprehensive plan.

2.1.2 Project Planning

Project Planning grants fund one or more elements of an effort to define, plan, and determine the feasibility of an affordable housing project. These grants must target planning for development projects adding new affordable housing units or preserving existing affordable housing units in a community.

Subcategories of Project Planning efforts include:

- **Preliminary Architecture and/or Engineering Report** focused on conceptualizing a physical program for a structure or parcel of land. As required by the site and the project idea, a report can assess the condition of existing public or private utility systems and other infrastructure; prioritize infrastructure upgrades; evaluate the condition of structures; develop programs for renovations or new construction; prepare preliminary building and infrastructure layouts, elevations, scopes of work, and profiles; present alternative design approaches; and estimate costs. The preliminary report can be used as a basis to later develop more detailed, bid-ready documents. It can also be used to assist with development feasibility analysis.
- **Impact Study** to identify and evaluate the magnitude of an affordable housing development or an affordable housing program and the anticipated impacts. This study can cover a wide range of environmental, infrastructure, fiscal, economic, and social considerations. Its purpose is to take a factual, detached look at how a proposal will affect the public's interests.
- **Feasibility Study** to determine whether a particular project concept can be practically implemented using a particular structure or parcel of land. This study articulates a development program and evaluates how well it fits the site. It identifies physical constraints and opportunities and determines a range of probable costs for each major construction component. Various development layouts and financing scenarios may be evaluated.
- **Title Search and Boundary Survey** to examine the legal ownership of a property, determine encumbrances on a property (i.e. liens, judgments, etc.) and define the boundaries of a property.
- **Site Planning** to develop the layout of infrastructure, landscaping, and building footprints on a parcel of land. This plan provides a determination of the number of residential units and the extent of infrastructure on a site and sets forth the site improvements component of the development program. A site plan helps communicate an overview of the development and the feel of the outdoor realm it will create.
- **Economic Market Analysis** to enable judgements about the feasibility of investing in mixed-use development in a market area. The study should compile and evaluate data about economic conditions in a defined market

area for the purpose of determining the level of demand for non-residential space in mixed-use developments.

- **Area Market Study** to complete a housing market study using a market area defined by the analyst, which could include multiple localities or subareas of localities such as census tracts. This study can be done to determine a policy direction for a locality or locality subarea that is part of the defined market area. It can also be done to evaluate the marketability of a project concept to be located somewhere within the defined market area. Market studies for a broader area, not tied to a specific project, may be eligible under Market Assessment grants below.
- **Marketing Plan** to market a site for affordable housing development to a potential developer or to detail how a development should be advertised to tenants and/or homeowners. This plan should identify the target market, available features, marketing strategy, and marketing budget necessary to ensure lease-up and/or presales.

2.1.3 Market Assessment

Market assessment grants are a tool for looking at a locality, or broader, level to identify the highest needs and priorities for the local housing stock.

Subcategories of Market assessment grants include:

- **Local Market Assessment** using a market area consisting of one locality. This study is conducted to determine a policy direction when a locality is focused on both meeting the housing needs that already occur within its jurisdiction and attracting a share of regional housing demand.
- **Regional Market Assessment** using a market area consisting of multiple localities. This study is conducted at the planning district commission level and is done to determine a regional policy agenda as well as agendas for the individual localities in the region. Multi-jurisdictional organizations may request up to \$20,000 per county or city to be covered in the study.

2.1.4 Policy Study

Policy study grants are intended to assist a locality in identifying and developing strategies to eliminate barriers to affordable housing within the jurisdiction.

Subcategories of Policy Study grants include:

- **Development Code Analysis** examines specific lots in a particular neighborhood of a city, or an entire small municipality, to determine what infrastructure or regulatory factors may be inhibiting housing development goals. A locality must be willing to pull apart their building codes, zoning and subdivision ordinances, and related development regulations to identify barriers to housing development and recommend fixes. Participation of department leadership is mandatory.
- **Policy Analysis** to enumerate and quantify the costs, benefits, and overall effectiveness of an existing or proposed housing policy or series of

policy alternatives that are intended to implement the desired goal. This is a systematic approach to determining whether a given policy is efficient and effective, or which of a series of policy options is likely to be the most efficient and effective, to make recommendations for new policies or improvements to existing policies. Policy Analysis funding should not be used to supplement the routine planning document update costs incurred by localities.

- **Data Analysis** compiles data points and uses analytical tools to determine their aggregate meaning. Through systematic collection and evaluation of evidence, data analysis provides an understanding of what has been happening in the affordable housing environment and helps inform policy response.
- **Needs Assessment** focuses on informing housing policy and therefore excluding elements geared toward pinpointing demand for a specific project proposal. Localities and advocacy groups use needs assessments to develop policies that will encourage the types and prices of housing most needed in the communities they serve.

2.1.5 Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement

The Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement supports the translation of any document created via the use of Community Impact funds into a language(s) other than English to make documents more accessible to all residents within a locality. This includes, but is not limited to General Plans, Community Plans, Zoning Codes, and Limited Area Plans. The creation of comparable low-literacy documents is also acceptable. This program may also cover live translation services needed to develop or present documents.

The Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement may be requested with any appropriate Market Analysis or Community Engagement application. Up to \$15,000 may be added to a Planning Grant request for translation services with reimbursement based on the actual cost of services. The applicant should provide a "Request for Quote" document listing the services anticipated to be needed, and a list of consultants who they intend to solicit quotes from once the needed services are identified.

2.2 Market Analysis Schedule

The budget and period of performance for this grant is twenty-four (24) months from the grant award. The grantee must submit the funded plan, assessment, or study as a part of the Final Report.

2.3 Market Analysis Restrictions

- Development Code Analysis may only be requested by local governments. The department head(s) or authorized representative overseeing building codes, ordinances and zoning must participate in the process.
- Policy Analysis funding should not be used to supplement the routine planning document update costs incurred by localities.
- Grantees must maintain control of the subject property during the period of performance or award will be terminated. Local government grantees may

consider their land use regulatory authority to evidence site control; however, where funded activities require on site access to private property, owner consent/right of entry is also required. Other grantees must demonstrate site control by a deed, an option to purchase, or an access/license agreement (e.g., a memorandum of understanding) executed by the owner of record.

- A current tax assessment record may be submitted to evidence ownership when a deed or option is not provided.
- Any memorandum of understanding used to evidence site control must be approved by Virginia Housing.
- Final architecture and engineering reports and final construction documents may not be funded under this program. Organizations needing funding to prepare final architecture and engineering documents may be eligible for funding through the Predevelopment Loan Program.
- Environmental site assessments are not eligible study types. They may be funded as a component of a preliminary Architecture / Engineering study.
- Appraisals are not eligible study types. They may be funded as a component of a feasibility study.

2.4 Market Analysis Reporting and Essential Elements

Organizations must submit quarterly reports throughout the period of performance. Organizations are required to submit their funded plan, assessment, or study as a part of the Final Report no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the period of performance. Quarterly reports are due on the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter.

Essential elements of planning grant deliverables are listed below. See **Appendix A** for more detailed descriptions of expected deliverables based on the specific nature of your planning grant. **Grantees are expected to discuss the intended deliverables with Virginia Housing at the start of the period of performance to ensure expectations are in alignment.**

Area Planning

- Explanation of the study purpose and intent.
- Description of the study area.
- Maps of the target area, including assessment maps showing the conditions (as applicable) of existing structures, infrastructure, land use, and environment; building inventory maps for historical studies; proposed target sites for development and/or future land use in the target area; and other maps produced as a part of the study.
- Recommended policy actions and other activities.
- Record of the public participation process (if applicable) including record of comments received.
- Conclusions and recommendations from the study.

Project Planning

- If a narrative report, explanation of the study purpose and intent.
- Analysis of existing conditions and/or description of a proposed housing development concept appropriate to the site.

- Maps or other graphic representations of the site and the proposed development concept.
- If a narrative report, conclusions and recommendations from the study.

Market Assessment

- Explanation of the study purpose.
- Description of economic climate and trends, particularly as it relates to jobs and associated wage ranges available to residents.
- Rental market analysis.
- Homeownership market analysis.
- Record of the public participation process (if applicable) including record of comments received.
- Conclusions and recommendations from the study.
- Regional studies should include evidence of buy-in from all localities in the region.

Policy Study

- Explanation of the study purpose.
- Description of existing or proposed policy.
- Description of study methodology.
- Analysis of data and existing or proposed policy to determine meaning and/or effects.
- Recommendation of a new policy or improvements to existing policy.

2.5 Market Analysis Disbursement

Funding is on a reimbursement basis. Funds may be requested from Virginia Housing via the submission of a claim in GMS. Grantees may request reimbursement for funds twice, up to 50% of the award before the plan, analysis or assessment is submitted to Virginia Housing, and the remainder after submission of the organization's completed report. Grants with multiple studies allow two reimbursements per study, so each study may have a 50% claim and a final claim.

Administration funds may be claimed in proportion to the other grant expenses (for example, if 10% of the budget is administration, 10% of each claim can be for administration).

Documentation of the expense to include date and amount must be submitted with the claim for each expense for which reimbursement is requested. Invoices for consultant or contractor work must document the grantee as the payer. The Administration portion claimed does not need to be documented on the claim; however, the use of these funds and proof of payment for all items must be made available to Virginia Housing upon request and maintained for a period of at least three (3) years after the expiration of the Grant period or date of last payment, whichever occurs first.

The amount requested per line item cannot exceed the currently approved budget. Claims are due the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter and at the time of the Final Report.

2.6 Application Requirements

The application package must include:

- Proposed Budget
- Completed Work Plan that outlines the activities that will take place and the schedule for completion.
- Attachments
 - Nonprofit Determination or proof of eligibility if applicant is not a unit of local government.
 - Organizational Chart
 - Prior year's audited financial statements, or prior year's reviewed financial statements or two (2) years of financial statements
 - Map of study area, when applicable
- Consultant Documents – required for any selected consultant being funded through this grant.
 - State Corporation Commission Certificate of Good Standing or Certificate of Fact issued within 90 days of application submission.
 - Note – if you are contracting with a business registered outside of Virginia, the business must register as a foreign corporation with the State Corporation Commission.
 - See <https://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Foreign-Business-Entities> for additional information.
 - Two letters of reference (Must be dated no more than three (3) years from the date of application).
 - Proposed scope of work with itemized costs
 - The proposal and estimate must clearly describe the scope of work to be performed and must include all required elements associated with the activity being funded.
 - The applicant's workplan should align with the consultant's proposal.
 - Proposals that do not demonstrate that the consultant will complete the full required scope of the selected planning activity may be deemed ineligible.
 - Public entities acting as a consultant for a project within their established area of expertise (for example, PDCs for regional planning) are exempt from the SCC certification and letter of reference requirements but must still provide the proposal and scope of work.
- Nonprofit applicants must select the consultant(s) prior to application submission.
- For local governments and others subject to the Virginia Public Procurement Act, if a consultant has not already been selected:
 - Draft Request for Proposal including at least the following elements:
 - Requested scope of work
 - Description of selection process
 - Selection criteria

2.6.1 Allowable Expenses

Approved organizations will only be reimbursed for the applicable expenses outlined in this section. Virginia Housing reserves the right to reject funding requested for any costs that are outside the scope of services listed below:

Administration

Costs associated with managing and administering the grant-funded project, including personnel costs (such as salary and fringe), reporting, financial tracking, and compliance activities. Administrative costs are limited to 10% of the total grant award and must be included within the overall grant request.

Consulting Costs

Payments to external professionals or subject-matter experts who provide specialized services necessary to implement the approved project.

Direct Assistance

Costs for direct services provided to eligible participants, clients, households, or volunteers involved in the approved project. Direct assistance may include payments, stipends, tuition, housing-related assistance, or other financial support provided directly to or on behalf of those served or assisting with the approved activity. This category may not be used for administrative, personnel, consultant, or general operating expenses.

Facility Rental

Costs for renting meeting space, training venues, or other facilities required to conduct project-related activities.

Marketing and Outreach

Costs associated with promoting the project and ensuring participation through communications, materials, advertising, or outreach efforts

Supplies & Materials

Consumable items and materials needed to carry out project activities, such as training materials, printed resources, or office supplies.

Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement

This is for applicants requesting the supplemental funds for translation activities as a part of the planning grant.

Note: Salary and fringe benefit costs for the organization's employees are not eligible under this program.

2.6.2 Contract Changes

Any request for a contract change must be submitted no less than thirty (30) days before the end of the performance period. Budget changes will only be considered if they do not increase the total amount of the award. Extension of the period of performance may only be granted under the following circumstances:

Procurement Delays

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to procurement delay after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System for approval in advance. Funds will not be disbursed on items that occur outside of the approved performance period.

Loss of Key Staff

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to loss of key staff after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System, to include a plan describing how and when the organization will be able to move forward with the project. Key staff must be listed in the application. Funds will not be disbursed for work that occurs outside of the approved performance period or for staff not listed in the application.

Consultant Delays

If the consultant identified in the application is unable to meet their obligations, the grantee may extend the period of performance in order to procure a new consultant. The grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System, to include required information about the newly procured consultant. Funds will not be disbursed for items that occur outside of the approved performance period or expenses incurred by a consultant not previously approved.

Property Evaluation Delays

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to delay in evaluations required and caused by government agencies (i.e. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, etc.) after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System, to include proof of submission of documents to the approving authority and the date. Funds will not be disbursed for items that occur outside of the approved performance period.

3 Community Engagement Grants

The Community Engagement program supports efforts to involve citizens in a planning or communications project geared toward the encouragement or implementation of affordable housing development. Awards are based on the degree to which proposals clearly define the challenges to be addressed; the likely effectiveness of the proposed community engagement methods; readiness to follow up with implementation efforts; and the availability of Virginia Housing funding. Awards will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Innovation Planning Grants also fall within the Community Engagement Grant program, although the work and deliverables may differ significantly from a typical Community Engagement effort.

Up to **\$50,000** is available for a Community Engagement Planning Grant.

3.1 Community Engagement Project Types

Requests for funds under the Community Engagement program must fall within one of the following objectives. Virginia Housing reserves the right to reject funding requested for any applications that are outside the focus areas listed below:

3.1.1 Community Input Sessions

Meetings, before implementation, facilitated by the organization to gather feedback and collect diverse viewpoints about a proposed development through conversations with members of the community in which the development will be located. These projects usually feature an iterative process in which community feedback is used to improve the project design.

3.1.2 Neighborhood Community Planning

The creation of a land-use proposal developed as a collaborative neighborhood effort to provide local government with rezoning or other land use strategies that support affordable housing. These projects often feature an iterative process to ensure that the plan or strategy reflects community desires and maximizes the probability of garnering support from decision making bodies.

3.1.3 Affordable Housing Awareness

Marketing efforts aimed toward the broad community or a clearly defined constituency to educate and inform on the benefits of incorporating affordable housing and potential strategies for implementation. These projects are intended to address objections a community may have to expected housing efforts, primarily in markets with identified challenges.

3.2 Innovation Planning Grants

Innovation Planning Grants fall within the Community Engagement Grant program, although the work and deliverables may differ significantly from a typical Community Engagement effort. These planning grants are available to explore the development of innovative ideas, such as innovative approaches to the build process, the use of new materials or designs, or innovative ways of providing housing or housing services. The expectation is the planning grant will produce a white paper or other document that lays the foundation for future innovation funding requests to Virginia Housing or other entities. These grants are targeted for applicants that have already identified and assembled appropriate partnerships and are planning for the implementation of their innovative strategies.

See the [Innovation Program](#) section for additional information.

3.3 Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement

The Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement supports the translation of any document created via the use of Community Impact funds into a language(s) other than English to make documents more accessible to all residents within a locality. This includes, but is not limited to General Plans, Community Plans, Zoning Codes, and Limited Area Plans. The creation of comparable low-literacy documents is also acceptable. This program may also cover live translation services needed to develop or present documents.

The Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement may be requested with any appropriate Market Analysis or Community Engagement application. Up to \$15,000 may be added to a Planning Grant request for translation services with reimbursement based on the actual cost of services. The applicant should provide a "Request for Quote" document listing the services anticipated to be needed, and a list of consultants who they intend to solicit quotes from once the needed services are identified.

3.4 Community Engagement Schedule

The budget and period of performance for this grant is twelve (12) months from the grant award.

The approved organization must be able to submit a report detailing results no more than 30 days after the end of the period of performance.

3.5 Community Engagement Restrictions

- Community Input Sessions must occur prior to project implementation.
- Grantees must maintain control of the subject property during the period of performance or award will be terminated. Local government grantees may consider their land use regulatory authority to evidence site control; however, where funded activities require on site access to private property, owner consent/right of entry is also required. Other grantees must demonstrate site control by a deed, an option to purchase, or an access/license agreement (e.g., a memorandum of understanding) executed by the owner of record.

- A current tax assessment record may be submitted to evidence ownership when a deed or option is not provided.
- Any memorandum of understanding used to evidence site control must be approved by Virginia Housing. Applicants for Neighborhood Community Planning that are not a local government or tribal entity must submit a letter of support from the locality's Planning or Community Development Department.

3.6 Community Engagement Reporting and Essential Elements

Organizations are required to submit quarterly reports and one final report detailing the performance of the planning effort. Reports are due on the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter.

Status Reports will include, when applicable:

- Who has been engaged so far? Community and stakeholder groups engaged. Outreach and engagement activities to date.
- What methods have been used?
- What challenges are you facing in community/stakeholder outreach? How are they being addressed?
- Any technical reports, master plans, etc. that result from grant activities must be submitted as a part of the report.
- A Final Report detailing the findings and insights discovered from the planning effort. The report should include trends, such as but not limited to, common stakeholder concerns and solutions. An action plan detailing next steps must also be included. Any final work product generated, such as design concepts, should be included with the Final Report.

Community Input Sessions

The creation of a final report documenting diverse and inclusive community input sessions coordinated to include community feedback concerning a potential development.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Summary of the proposed development
- Summary of the participation process
- Summary of stakeholder concerns expressed
- Solutions proposed by the developing organization
- Action plan detailing next steps

Neighborhood Community Planning

The creation of a land-use proposal developed as a collaborative neighborhood effort to provide local government with rezoning or other land use solutions that support affordable housing.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Summary of project purpose
- Summary of the participation process
- Summary of stakeholder concerns expressed

- Maps, plans, design concepts, renderings, and other products as necessary to memorialize the outcome of the planning process and meet its goals
- Implementation strategy

Affordable Housing Awareness

The creation and implementation of a communications plan that is aimed toward educating and informing the community on the benefits of incorporating affordable housing and potential strategies for implementation.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Summary of project purpose
- Summary of the participation process
- Materials used in the communications plan
- Details on when and how materials were distributed in a way that grants all community members the opportunity to access the materials

Innovation Planning Grants

The essential element is a white paper or other document that lays the foundation for future innovation funding requests to Virginia Housing or other entities. This may be a broad, comprehensive framing of the proposed innovation or deeper analysis of a specific element necessary to further define the concept and seek funding for the implementation of an innovative demonstration. White papers should explain what activities were undertaken, what was learned, and how the innovative idea could be implemented as a future demonstration project.

3.7 Community Engagement Disbursement

Funding is on a reimbursement basis. Funds may be requested quarterly for reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in completing the grant activities. Administration funds may be claimed in proportion to the other grant expenses (for example, if 10% of the budget is administration, 10% of each claim can be for administration).

Documentation of the expense to include date and amount must be submitted with the claim for each expense for which reimbursement is requested. Invoices for consultant or contractor work must document the grantee as the payer. The administration portion claimed does not need to be documented on the claim; however, the use of these funds and proof of payment for all items must be made available to Virginia Housing upon request and maintained for a period of at least three (3) years after the expiration of the Grant period or date of last payment, whichever occurs first.

The amount requested per line item cannot exceed the currently approved budget. Claims are due the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter and at the time of the Final Report.

3.8 Application Requirements

The application package must include:

- Proposed Budget

- Completed Work Plan that outlines the activities that will take place and the schedule for completion.
- Attachments
 - Nonprofit Determination or proof of eligibility if applicant is not a unit of local government.
 - Organizational Chart
 - Prior year's audited financial statements, or prior year's reviewed financial statements or two (2) years of financial statements
 - Map of study area, when applicable
- Consultant Documents – required for any selected consultant being funded through this grant.
 - State Corporation Commission Certificate of Good Standing or Certificate of Fact issued within 90 days of application submission.
 - Note – if you are contracting with a business registered outside of Virginia, the business must register as a foreign corporation with the State Corporation Commission.
 - See <https://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Foreign-Business-Entities> for additional information.
 - Two letters of reference (Must be dated no more than three (3) years from the date of application).
 - Proposed scope of work with itemized costs
 - The proposal and estimate must clearly describe the scope of work to be performed and must include all required elements associated with the activity being funded.
 - The applicant's workplan should align with the consultant's proposal.
 - Proposals that do not demonstrate that the consultant will complete the full required scope of the selected planning activity may be deemed ineligible.
 - Public entities acting as a consultant for a project within their established area of expertise (for example, PDCs for regional planning) are exempt from the SCC certification and letter of reference requirements but must still provide the proposal and scope of work.
- Nonprofit applicants must select the consultant(s) prior to application submission.
- For local governments and others subject to the Virginia Public Procurement Act, if a consultant has not already been selected:
 - Draft Request for Proposal including at least the following elements:
 - Requested scope of work
 - Description of selection process
 - Selection criteria

3.8.1 Allowable Expenses

Approved organizations will only be reimbursed for the applicable expenses outlined in this section. Virginia Housing reserves the right to reject funding requested for any costs that are outside the scope of services listed below:

Administration

Costs associated with managing and administering the grant-funded project, including personnel costs (such as salary and fringe), reporting, financial tracking, and compliance

activities. Administrative costs are limited to 10% of the total grant award and must be included within the overall grant request.

Consulting Costs

Payments to external professionals or subject-matter experts who provide specialized services necessary to implement the approved project.

Direct Assistance

Costs for direct services provided to eligible participants, clients, households, or volunteers involved in the approved project. Direct assistance may include payments, stipends, tuition, housing-related assistance, or other financial support provided directly to or on behalf of those served or assisting with the approved activity. This category may not be used for administrative, personnel, consultant, or general operating expenses.

Equipment

Purchase or rental of major equipment necessary to support the implementation and delivery of the approved project. Equipment refers to tangible items used for project operations that are not consumable and have an ongoing useful life, such as machinery, large tools, lifts, dumpsters, or other specialized equipment required for the project. This category does not include supplies, small tools, or routine operating materials.

Facility Rental

Costs for renting meeting space, training venues, or other facilities required to conduct project-related activities.

Legal Expenses

Legal costs associated with the project, such as document preparation or recording fees.

Marketing and Outreach

Costs associated with promoting the project and ensuring participation through communications, materials, advertising, or outreach efforts

Supplies & Materials

Consumable items and materials needed to carry out project activities, such as training materials, printed resources, or office supplies.

Multi-Cultural Materials Supplement

This is for applicants requesting the supplemental funds for translation activities as a part of the planning grant.

Note: Salary and fringe benefit costs for the organization's employees are not eligible under this program.

3.8.2 Contract Changes

Any request for a contract change must be submitted no less than thirty (30) days before the end of the performance period. Budget changes will only be considered if they do not increase the total amount of the award. Extension of the period of performance may only be granted under the following circumstances:

Procurement Delays

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to procurement delay after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System for approval in advance. Funds will not be disbursed on items that occur outside of the approved performance period.

Loss of Key Staff

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to loss of key staff after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System, to include a plan describing how and when the organization will be able to move forward with the project. Key staff must be listed in the application. Funds will not be disbursed for work that occurs outside of the approved performance period or for staff not listed in the application.

Consultant Delays

If the consultant identified in the application is unable to meet their obligations, the grantee may extend the period of performance in order to procure a new consultant. The grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System, to include required information about the newly procured consultant. Funds will not be disbursed for items that occur outside of the approved performance period or expenses incurred by a consultant not previously approved.

Property Evaluation Delays

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to delay in evaluations required and caused by government agencies (i.e. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, etc.) after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a Contract Amendment Request via the Grants Management System, to include proof of submission of documents to the approving authority and the date. Funds will not be disbursed for items that occur outside of the approved performance period.

4 Stabilization and Deconstruction Grants

4.1 Stabilization and Deconstruction Eligibility

The **Stabilization and Deconstruction Program** supports efforts to eliminate blight, create affordable housing, and revitalize communities by funding critical structural or building system repairs or dismantling buildings to facilitate affordable housing development. To qualify for this grant, the building(s) must be in a Revitalization Area. Options for this include:

1. The development is located in either of the following, as defined by HUD: A Qualified Census Tract; or a Targeted Area, wherein 70% or more of the families have incomes which are $\leq$ 80% statewide median income [NOTE: these census tracts are included in the definition of Targeted Area for single family lending purposes but do not include ACEDS].
2. The development is located in a redevelopment area, conservation area or rehabilitation district created by a city or county, pursuant to VA Code §36-1 et seq. Documentation must (a) demonstrate that area exists at the time of application; (b) accurately depict area boundaries; and (c) clearly show that the proposed development lies or will lie within those boundaries.
3. The development is located in a revitalization area designated by resolution adopted pursuant to the terms of VA Code § 36-55.30:2 for the purpose of enabling Virginia Housing to provide financing to either a mixed-income or mixed-income/mixed-use development. Documentation must include a resolution from the locality supporting the development's location within the revitalization area.
4. The development is located in a Housing Rehabilitation Zone established through an ordinance created by a city, county or town pursuant to VA Code §36-55.64. Documentation must include a copy of the ordinance with support that the development lies within the Rehabilitation Zone.
5. The development is located In an opportunity zone designated by the Commonwealth pursuant to the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (PL 115-97) and has a binding commitment of funding acceptable to Virginia Housing.
6. The development is located in a jurisdiction that confirms that the development, as proposed to be constructed or rehabilitated, will utilize new or existing housing as part of a community revitalization plan. **The applicant must use Virginia Housing's Community Revitalization Plan Form Letter provided in Appendix B.**
7. The development is located on land owned by federally recognized or Virginia-recognized Tribal Nations located within the present-day external boundaries of the Commonwealth.
8. The development is located in a Virginia Main Street designated area or a Virginia Enterprise Zone.

See **Appendix B** for additional resources on the Revitalization Area.

4.2 Stabilization

The Stabilization Grant is intended to eliminate blight and vacancy, create affordable housing, and revitalize communities. This grant focuses on critical repairs necessary to preserve a building for later full rehabilitation into housing units.

Requests for funds under the Stabilization Grant must be for interim repairs to vacant blighted properties intended for residential or mixed use that are located in a revitalization area. According to the Code of Virginia §36-3, a “blighted property” means any individual commercial, industrial, or residential structure or improvement that endangers the public’s health, safety, or welfare because the structure or improvement upon the property is dilapidated, deteriorated, or violates minimum health and safety standards, or any structure or improvement previously designated as blighted pursuant to §36-49.1:1, under the process for determination of “spot blight.”

The program is targeted toward vacant and deteriorated properties whose poor condition creates an atmosphere of physical and economic blight in the surrounding area and tend to deter reinvestment. Once full rehabilitation and construction are complete, residential units must remain affordable to individuals or families whose incomes do not exceed 150% of Area Median Income (AMI).

The property must be owned by the applicant. The applicant is responsible for the selection and management of contractors.

Awards are based on the organization’s readiness to complete the project; consistency of the proposed project with local guidelines; the severity of the structure’s blighted condition; the impact of the proposed project in terms of housing units produced and ability to spur revitalization; use of sustainable materials; and the availability of Virginia Housing funding. Awards will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

4.2.1 Schedule

The budget and period of performance for the Stabilization grant is twenty-four (24) months from the grant award.

4.2.2 Allowable Activities

Funds may be used for both façade improvements and building stabilization.

4.2.2.1 Façade Improvements

The following façade improvement activities are eligible under this program: Removal of non-contributing false facades; building cleaning (non-sandblasting); stucco restoration; tuckpointing masonry; painting; replacement or reconstructive woodwork; new doors and windows; restoration of doors, windows, or other building features to historically appropriate condition; signs, awnings, and

canopies (must be associated with other façade improvements); and exterior lighting.

Though façade rehabilitation may be included in the scope of work submitted, **no more than 50% of the award may be used for façade improvement.**

4.2.2.2 Building Stabilization

The following building stabilization activities are eligible under this program: roof repair and/or replacement; interior structural improvements (e.g. floor joists, ceiling repairs); building systems improvements (e.g. plumbing, electric, HVAC); fencing to secure the property; and hardscape improvements.

4.3 Deconstruction

The Deconstruction Grant focuses on dismantling buildings in revitalization areas to make way for affordable housing development. The goal is to help revitalize communities by eliminating blight and replacing it with multiple units of affordable housing, while maximizing the reuse potential of the original building's components.

Qualifying structures are those blighted or abandoned structures that inhibit public safety and have been deemed unsuitable for rehabilitation. According to the Code of Virginia §36-3, a “blighted property” means any individual commercial, industrial, or residential structure or improvement that endangers the public’s health, safety, or welfare because the structure or improvement upon the property is dilapidated, deteriorated, or violates minimum health and safety standards, or any structure or improvement previously designated as blighted pursuant to §36-49.1:1, under the process for determination of “spot blight.” Deconstruction must lead to site rehabilitation and site availability for affordable housing development purposes. Where possible, building components must be salvaged for reuse and/or recycling.

For a structure to qualify for this funding opportunity, the building must be physically and/or economically unsuitable for rehabilitation. The applicant must clearly demonstrate this as a part of the application. Examples of how this may be shown include:

- Documenting rehabilitation costs that exceed 75% of the property value.
- The structure is designated as blighted by the locality before application.
- Blight has been determined by applying the existing dangerous building ordinance, or there is a finding of violation of the building code or applicable occupancy or habitability code in a manner consistent with the locality’s ordinance.
- Demonstrating the continued vacancy of a property due to the economic obsolescence of the property. For example, an abandoned factory in a primarily residential area.

Once development is complete, the homes created must remain affordable to individuals or families whose incomes do not exceed 150% of Area Median Income (AMI).

This grant is not intended to support one-for-one replacement of single-family homes. The only exception is when there is significant scale and impact, such as when multiple adjacent structures are replaced at once. Generally, if a single-family home is deconstructed, it must be replaced by multiple residential units. Awards are based on an organization’s readiness to complete the project; commitment to building component reuse; environmental study findings;

feasibility of the project to develop housing on the site; and the availability of Virginia Housing funding. Awards will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

4.3.1 Schedule

The budget and period of performance for the Deconstruction grant is six (6) months from the grant award.

4.4 Stabilization and Deconstruction Allowable Expenses

4.4.1.1 Administration

Administration cannot exceed 10% of the grant request. Administration costs are included in the maximum award amount.

4.4.1.2 Construction Materials

Costs of materials used to carry out the grant activities.

4.4.1.3 Contractor Costs

Construction services to carry out the grant activities.

The following items are not eligible under this program:

- Acquisition costs
- Any town, city, county, or state permitting or impact fees; with the exception of asbestos and/or demolition permitting
- Refinancing existing debts
- Personnel salaries
- New building construction or new building additions
- Interior improvements (excluding building stabilization improvements)
- Non-fixed improvements, inventory, or equipment
- Architectural design costs or preparation of construction documents

4.5 Restrictions

- Applicants with a current Community Impact Grant must be on schedule and on track to complete the objectives to be awarded a Stabilization or Deconstruction grant simultaneously.
- Applicants with an existing or previous Virginia Housing grant must not have any outstanding compliance issue(s) or issues resulting in funds withheld within the twelve (12) months before application submission.
- Applicants are limited to one grant per site. When an entity owns multiple properties that are adjacent, funding may be shared between these properties. When an entity owns multiple properties that are not adjacent, only one property may receive program funding at a time.
- Funds may not be used to pay for any expenses incurred prior to receiving the grant award and executing a contract with Virginia Housing.

- Redevelopment plans must indicate that at least 50% of the property will be used for residential units.
- Stabilization or deconstruction bids must be submitted to Virginia Housing within the first ninety (90) days of the award, if not provided with the application.
- Grantees must maintain ownership during the period of performance or award will be terminated.
- Funds may not be used to pay for the deconstruction of single-family homes on a scattered site basis or deconstruction of an individual home for replacement with another home. Projects must demonstrate significant community impact resulting in the development of multiple units of affordable housing.

4.6 Application Requirements

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to meet with Matthew Bolster, Strategic Housing Officer, who will review the applicant's plans per the program requirements to determine eligibility. During this meeting, the applicant will be provided with general guidance and informed as to whether the applicant is sufficiently prepared to move forward to application submittal. The Application package must include the following:

4.6.1.1 Proposed Budget

The proposed budget may not exceed \$150,000.

If bids are not received at the time of application, the applicant will need to provide a detailed cost estimate that justifies their budget request. At least three bids should be received for contractor work. Bids must be received and provided to Virginia Housing within 90 days of grant award. If the lowest bid is not selected or if three bids were not received by the applicant, the applicant must provide justification. If multiple contractors are required three bids must be provided for each scope of work.

4.6.1.2 Attachments

The following must be attached to the application:

- Cost estimate or three qualified bids for stabilization or deconstruction activities
- Evidence of revitalization area qualification
- Building exterior and interior photographs
- Environmental study
- Structural assessment
- Proof of ownership
- Redevelopment plan indicating a feasible strategy for creating multiple housing units on the property
- Nonprofit determination or other proof of eligibility if the applicant is not a general unit of local government
- Prior year's audited financial statements, or prior year's reviewed financial statements or two (2) years of financial statements
- Contractor documents (if selected)
 - Evidence of licensure

- Evidence of general liability insurance

4.6.2 Approval

Funds will be awarded based on an assessment of the organization's application, and the availability of Virginia Housing funds.

The selected organization will receive a Grant Award Notification (GAN) and a Grant Agreement if awarded funds. The organization must return the Grant Agreement to Virginia Housing with signature by an authorized representative.

Approval may take up to sixty (60) days.

4.6.3 Denial

Organizations that are not approved for funds will receive written communication from Virginia Housing explaining the denial of grant funds.

4.6.4 Reporting

Organizations are required to submit quarterly reports detailing the progress of the project. Reports are due the 15th of the month following the end of a quarter. Organizations are also required to submit a final report no more than 30 calendar days after the end of the period of performance. This report must include "after" pictures documenting the completed work.

4.6.5 Disbursement

Funding is on a reimbursement basis. Grantees can only request reimbursement of funds in proportion to work plan objective achievement. Administration funds may be claimed in proportion to the other grant expenses (for example, if 10% of the budget is administration, 10% of each claim can be for administration).

Documentation of the expense to include date and amount must be submitted with the claim for each expense for which reimbursement is requested. Invoices for contractor work must document the grantee as the payee. The administration portion claimed does not need to be documented on the claim; however, the use of these funds and proof of payment for all items must be made available to Virginia Housing upon request and maintained for a period of at least three (3) years after the expiration of the Grant period or date of last payment, whichever occurs first.

The amount requested per line item cannot exceed the currently approved budget. Claims are due the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter and at the time of the Final Report.

4.6.6 Contract Changes

4.6.6.1 Budget

If the grantee wants to change the amount budgeted for any given line item after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a contract amendment request via the Grants Management System for approval in advance. Funds will not be disbursed on projects that are not under the approved plans. As a result, applicants are encouraged to estimate their budgets carefully.

4.6.6.2 Work Plan

If the grantee wants to change its work plan after award approval from Virginia Housing, it must submit a new work plan thirty (30) days before the desired date of implementation via a contract amendment request in the Grants Management System (GMS). The grantee will then receive instructions to change the desired work plan or approval.

4.6.6.3 Loss of Key Staff

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to loss of key staff after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a contract amendment request via the Grants Management System, to include a plan describing how and when the organization will be able to move forward with the project. Key staff must be listed in the application. Funds will not be disbursed for work that occurs outside of the approved performance period or for staff not listed in the application. Any request for extension must be submitted no less than thirty (30) days before the end of the performance period.

4.6.6.4 Property Evaluation Delays

If the grantee needs to extend its period of performance due to delay in property evaluations required and caused by government agencies (i.e. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, etc.) after award approval from Virginia Housing, the grantee must submit a contract amendment request via the Grants Management System, to include proof of submission of documents and the date. Funds will not be disbursed on items that occur outside of the approved performance period. Any request for extension must be submitted no less than thirty (30) days before the end of the performance period.

5 Innovation Program

The Community Impact Grant Innovation Program seeks to support technological innovation in the homebuilding industry and process innovation in the delivery of housing related services. Funding may be used to demonstrate innovative development techniques or innovative materials, or innovations across housing delivery systems that demonstrate the potential to serve primarily low-to-moderate income households more efficiently or more effectively.

Projects should use technologies and techniques that vary significantly from approaches usually taken. Projects should introduce innovations that have the potential to be repeatable in a way that translates to significant cost savings or improvements in the product delivered. While it is understood that innovative approaches will not necessarily be more efficient initially, applicants should include projections on how the innovation can lead to lower costs, shorter timelines, or offer other improvements in the future.

Priority will be given to projects showcasing innovation that is new to Virginia. Projects that introduce innovations to new markets are eligible for funding, particularly if the innovation has the potential to address a critical housing need within the market. Priority is also given to non-profit developers serving special population and very low-income (at or below 50% of AMFI) needs.

Virginia Housing anticipates contracting with a third party that will review and evaluate some or all the results of the Innovation grants. Applicants must agree to work with the evaluator and to provide project details for this evaluation.

5.1 Requests for Funding

Requests for funding under the Innovation Program must fall within one of the following categories. Virginia Housing reserves the right to reject funding requested for any applications outside the focus areas listed below:

5.1.1 Innovation Planning Grants

Innovation Planning grants are available within the Community Impact Planning Grant to explore the development of innovative ideas, such as innovative approaches to the building process, the use of new materials or designs, or innovative ways of providing housing or housing services. The expectation is the planning grant will produce a white paper or other document that lays the foundation for future innovation funding requests to Virginia Housing or other entities. These grants are targeted for applicants that have already identified and assembled appropriate partnerships and are planning for the implementation of their innovative strategies.

Up to \$50,000 is available for an Innovation Planning Grant. This award may be used concurrently with another Community Impact Grant provided there are unique outputs for the different grants. For example, the Innovation Planning could support the development of the innovative approach to building while a Market Analysis grant funds site planning for the proposed development that incorporates the approach. See the [Community Engagement Grants](#) section of this Handbook for more information on the Community Engagement Grant program.

5.1.2 Innovative Program Grants

Innovative Program Grants are available for a program or service that incorporates innovative approaches to meeting housing needs. Eligible programs should have already assembled partnerships that are ready to deliver services under a new model. Program grants are a one-time injection of funding intended to jump start efforts and are not a reoccurring model for funding efforts. Award decisions will prioritize well-developed plans for continuing the effort, if successful, after the conclusion of Virginia Housing funding. Up to \$200,000 is available for Innovative Program Grants in one of the following subcategories.

Innovative Services:

Projects should focus on challenges related to housing services, such as property management, maintenance, or community engagement. The objective is to develop innovative services that enhance the overall living experience for residents and address specific community needs.

Innovative Financing:

Projects should address challenges related to funding and financial accessibility for housing initiatives. This could involve exploring new funding models, financial products, or investment strategies to support affordable housing projects. Innovation Grant funding in support of Innovative Financing efforts can be used to develop the model and to build the case for utilization of the methodology. Award of an Innovation Grant in no way implies Virginia Housing has accepted and is prepared to finance with methods outside of standard financing practices.

5.1.3 Innovative Construction Grants

Innovative Construction Grants supplement the cost of construction for projects incorporating non-conventional homebuilding processes that show potential to reduce construction time, cost, or resources needed. Up to \$500,000 is available for innovative construction grants in one of the following categories:

Innovative Materials:

Projects should focus on identifying specific challenges related to housing construction materials. This could include issues such as affordability, sustainability, or availability of suitable materials. The objective is to develop or discover materials that address these challenges effectively.

Innovative Building Approaches:

Projects center on redefining the construction process itself. Projects should aim to identify challenges related to traditional building methods, such as time-consuming processes or high labor costs. The objective is to develop innovative construction techniques that streamline the building process while maintaining or improving quality.

Innovative Project Enhancements:

This category provides funding to enhance a project that has received financing from Virginia Housing by incorporating an innovative improvement to the project. An example of an enhancement project could be adding a more environmentally

sustainable system to a planned multi-family project. The applicable innovation must be implemented as part of the project.

The Innovative Project Enhancements grant will not replace funding already approved for the project. The applicant is responsible for ensuring the planned innovation will be allowable within the existing financing agreement with Virginia Housing.

Applications for Innovative Program Grants and Innovative Construction Grants will be accepted on a competitive basis. This program may not be offered every year.

5.2 Allowable Expenses

Approved organizations will only be reimbursed for the applicable expenses outlined in this section. Virginia Housing reserves the right to reject funding requested for any costs that are outside the scope of services listed below:

Administration

Costs associated with managing and administering the grant-funded project, including personnel costs (such as salary and fringe), reporting, financial tracking, and compliance activities. **Administrative costs are limited to 10% of the total grant award** and must be included within the overall grant request.

Community Engagement

Costs related to activities that involve community members, stakeholders, or partners in project planning, implementation, or feedback. Allowable costs may include expenses such as space rental, meeting supplies, printing, materials, or other costs directly related to conducting community engagement activities. This category may not be used for personnel costs (salary & fringe) or administrative costs.

Construction Materials

Costs of materials used to carry out the grant activities.

Consulting Costs

Payments to external professionals or subject-matter experts who provide specialized services necessary to implement the approved project.

Contractor Costs

Construction services to carry out the grant activities.

Direct Assistance

Costs for direct services provided to eligible participants, clients, households, or volunteers involved in the approved project. Direct assistance may include payments, stipends, tuition, housing-related assistance, or other financial support provided directly to or on behalf of those served or assisting with the approved activity. This includes stipends to students who are working on a project in connection with a university. This category may not be used for administrative, personnel, consultant, or general operating expenses.

Equipment

Purchase or rental of major equipment necessary to support the implementation and delivery of the approved project. Equipment refers to tangible items used for project operations that are not consumable and have an ongoing useful life, such as machinery, large tools, lifts, dumpsters, or other specialized equipment required for the project. This category does not include supplies, small tools, or routine operating materials.

Legal Expenses

Legal costs associated with the project, such as document preparation or recording fees.

Supplies & Materials

Consumable items and materials needed to carry out project activities, such as training materials, printed resources, or office supplies.

Travel Costs

Reasonable transportation, lodging, and related travel expenses necessary for staff, consultants, or participants to carry out project activities.

5.3 Schedule

The budget and period of performance for this grant shall not exceed twenty-four (24) months for Innovative Services Grants or thirty-six (36) months for Innovative Construction Grants.

5.3.1 Project Presentations

The highest scoring applicants may be invited to provide a presentation to Virginia Housing in support of their application. These presentations may be in the form of a site visit by Virginia Housing, in-person meeting, or a virtual meeting, depending on the scope of the project. Project presentations are a step of Virginia Housing's review process, and the invitation to provide a presentation does not guarantee a grant offer will be extended.

5.3.2 Approval

Funds will be awarded to the highest scoring applications based on the availability of Virginia Housing funds. Virginia Housing may offer grants at amounts below the requested amount and negotiate with the applicant on the deliverables.

The selected organizations will receive a Grant Award Notification (GAN) and a Grant Agreement once approved for funds under the award. The organizations must return the Grant Agreement to Virginia Housing with signature by an authorized representative.

5.3.3 Denial

Organizations that are not approved for funds will receive written communication from Virginia Housing explaining the denial of grant funds.

5.4 Evaluation

Proposals received for the Innovative Program Grants and Innovative Construction Grants will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

- **Identification of a Specific Challenge:** Clearly defines the material, method, or service-related challenge(s) the project aims to overcome, providing context and relevance.
- **Assembly of an Appropriate Team:** Demonstrates a well-rounded team comprising experts, innovators, and community stakeholders, essential for addressing the identified building challenges. Showcases a well-coordinated partnership network, including service providers, community organizations, and residents, essential for implementing innovative services.
- **Implementation Plan:** Presents a detailed plan describing how the innovation will be sourced, tested, and integrated within the grant timeframe.
- **Outcome:** Specifies the expected outcomes from the successful completion of the project, including the impact on housing affordability, sustainability, services, occupant satisfaction, or any other relevant factor.
- **Program Evaluation:** Proposes a robust evaluation plan that assesses the effectiveness of the innovation in addressing the identified challenge.
- **Sustainability Plan:** Describes a strategy for continuing the use of the innovation beyond the grant period, ensuring its continued impact on housing initiatives.

5.5 Guidelines for Deliverables

This program encourages a dynamic and flexible approach to deliverables, fostering creativity and allowing for strategic pivoting as projects evolve. Applicants that have not identified all the elements for the initial proposal and developed a timeline are encouraged to apply for an Innovation Planning Grant which provides funding for the development of an innovative project concept.

Here are the guidelines for defining clear processes while embracing flexibility and encouraging innovative thinking:

1. **Initial Project Proposal:**
 - **Clear Problem Statement:** Clearly define the specific challenge within Innovative Materials, Building Approaches, Services, or Financing your project aims to address. Explain its relevance.
 - **Proposed Solution:** Present an innovative solution, detailing its uniqueness and potential impact. Emphasize its alignment with the program's objectives.
 - **Collaborative Partnerships:** Identify and outline the roles of project partners, emphasizing their expertise and contributions to the innovation process.
2. **Milestone-Based Approach:**

- **Flexible Timeline:** Develop a tentative project timeline with key milestones. Allow flexibility to adjust timelines based on the project's progress and unforeseen challenges.
 - **Progress Updates:** Provide regular updates on achieved milestones, challenges faced, and adaptations made. Emphasize the learnings and insights gained during the process.
3. **Iterative Prototyping:**
 - **Prototyping:** Encourage the creation of prototypes or pilot programs to test innovative ideas in real-world scenarios. Prototypes allow for quick testing, learning, and modification of concepts.
 - **Feedback Loops:** Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from community members, experts, and stakeholders. Use feedback to iterate and refine project deliverables.
 4. **Creativity and Adaptability:**
 - **Creative Problem-Solving:** Encourage teams to brainstorm and experiment with various creative solutions. Emphasize the importance of out-of-the-box thinking in addressing challenges.
 - **Adaptation Plan:** Develop a clear strategy for adapting the project based on feedback, unexpected outcomes, or changing community needs. Define triggers and criteria for pivoting the project direction if necessary.
 5. **Evaluation and Impact Assessment:**
 - **Evaluation Metrics:** Define measurable criteria to assess the effectiveness of the innovation, such as cost reduction, improved efficiency, community satisfaction, or environmental impact.
 - **Continuous Assessment:** Regularly evaluate the project's impact against established metrics. Use data-driven insights to make informed decisions and adjust project strategies as needed.
 6. **Sustainability and Scalability:**
 - **Sustainability Plan:** Develop a plan for sustaining the innovation beyond the grant period. Explore revenue models, partnerships, or community engagement strategies to ensure the project's longevity.
 - **Scalability:** Assess the potential for scaling the innovation to other communities or regions. Identify factors that can facilitate or hinder scalability and propose strategies to overcome challenges.
 7. **Documentation and Knowledge Sharing:**
 - **Comprehensive Documentation:** Maintain detailed records of the project, including methodologies, challenges, successes, and lessons learned. Document all iterations and modifications made during the innovation process.
 - **Knowledge Sharing:** Encourage knowledge sharing within the project team and with other grant recipients. Organize workshops, webinars, or peer-sharing sessions to foster collaboration and collective learning.

5.6 Reporting

Organizations are required to submit quarterly status reports detailing the progress of the project. Reports are due the 15th of the month following the end of a quarter.

Organizations are also required to submit a final report no more than 30 calendar days after the end of the performance period.

Organizations agree to attend a semi-annual meeting with a team of Virginia Housing Associates to discuss the project and any barriers that have arisen. These meetings are intended to be an interactive opportunity to document the efforts of the project, support the project's implementation team, and identify and bring in other partners if needed.

5.7 Disbursement

Funding is on a reimbursement basis. Funds may be requested quarterly for reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in completing the grant activities. Administration funds may be claimed in proportion to the other grant expenses (for example, if 10% of the budget is administration, 10% of each claim can be for administration).

Documentation of the expense to include date and amount must be submitted with the claim for each expense for which reimbursement is requested. Invoices for consultant or contractor work must document the grantee as the payee. The administration portion claimed does not need to be documented on the claim; however, the use of these funds and proof of payment for all items must be made available to Virginia Housing upon request and maintained for a period of at least three (3) years after the expiration of the grant period or date of last payment, whichever occurs first.

The amount requested per line item cannot exceed the currently approved budget. Claims are due the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter and at the time of the Final Report.

6 Appendix A: Planning Grant Deliverables

Essential Elements by specific deliverable types are listed below. Grantees should discuss the planned deliverables of a planning grant at the beginning of the period of performance to ensure all expectations are met.

Area Market Study

This is a housing market study using a market area defined by the analyst, which could include multiple localities or subareas of localities such as census tracts. This study can be done to determine a policy direction for a locality or locality subarea that is part of the defined market area. It can also be done to evaluate the marketability of a project concept to be located somewhere within the defined market area.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of the study purpose
- Description of proposed project concept (if one has been formed)
- Delineation of the market area and rationale
- Description of economic climate and trends, particularly as it relates to jobs and associated wage ranges available to residents of the market area
- Demographic characteristics and trends for the market area, arriving at households by income category
- Determination of existing and pipeline supply, by type, tenure, and price, identifying developments most comparable to the project concept (if formed)
- Determination of supply gaps, or income-qualified demand for the project concept (if formed)
- Conclusions and recommendations

Expert Reports

This is a report from an outside team of volunteer planners or other development experts setting forth recommendations for the broader development of a small area surrounding a proposed affordable housing development. The report constitutes a plan that attempts to integrate affordable housing with its environs by promoting linkages with existing development and growth of a cohesive community setting over time.

The following essential elements must be included in the final report:

- Explanation of purpose
- Summary map of existing physical conditions
- Vision, goals, and objectives for the area
- Proposed physical improvement program and/or future land use map
- Narrative summary of recommendations

Data Analysis

This is a compilation of data points and use of analytical tools to determine their aggregate meaning. Through systematic collection and evaluation of evidence, data analysis provides an understanding of what has been happening in the environment and helps inform policy response.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of purpose
- Description and evaluation of existing information sources
- The research design for collecting additional information if needed

- Summary of data compiled/collected
- Analysis of data using appropriate methodology
- Implications and conclusions

Development Code Analysis

This is a stress test conducted to help a locality determine barriers to infill development, with the participation of local officials responsible for development review. The locality typically has identified housing types it wants to encourage in a comprehensive plan or small area plan document and wants to identify code and process barriers to their implementation. Officials involved should be the ones responsible for reviewing proposals for compliance with zoning, subdivision, building, fire protection, public works, and public utilities codes and standards. The product is a report on findings and recommendations for changes to development standards and processes.

The following essential elements must be included in the final report:

- Explanation of study purpose and process
- Selection of housing types to test and locations for stress test exercise
- Summary of stress test results
- Identification of barriers in codes, processes, and standards
- Recommended changes

Economic Market Analysis

This is a compilation and evaluation of data about economic conditions in a defined area, generally for the purpose of determining the level of demand for non-residential space in mixed-use developments. An economic market study helps enable judgements about the feasibility of investing in mixed-use development in a market area.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of the study purpose
- Definition of market area
- Analysis of demand for commercial space by the targeted business types
- Estimates of the commercial square footage that could be supported in a new mixed-use development
- Summary of key conclusions and recommendations

Feasibility Study

This is a study to determine whether a particular project concept can be practically implemented using a particular structure or parcel of land. This study articulates a development program for a particular site. It determines probable hard and soft development costs, proposes an operating budget if applicable, and explores means of financing the development. Various financing scenarios may be evaluated. Preliminary architecture and/or engineering reports often provide input data for feasibility studies.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of the study purpose
- Description of the proposed development
- Proposed development budget
- Development financing scenarios
- Recommended course of action

Historical Study

This is a study to determine whether a structure or district is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Virginia Landmarks Register. This study researches the historical and architectural significance of an individual building or a series of buildings in a defined area. The intent of the study must be to qualify buildings for federal and/or state historic rehabilitation tax credits.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Location maps and building inventory maps in the required format
- Proposed boundary of district and justification for same
- Description of proposed district or property, including a narrative statement of significance
- Exterior photos of all buildings in the district, or both exterior and interior photos if an individual structure is the subject
- Supplementary photos, such as streetscape photos and historical photos
- Organization of the above on the required nomination forms and the use of the required photo cataloging system

For a detailed checklist of requirements, see: https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Register_Nomination_Checklist_revised_2024.pdf and further guidelines at https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SurveyManual_2017.pdf

Impact Study

This is a study to identify and evaluate the past or anticipated impacts of affordable housing development or an affordable housing program. This study can cover a wide range of environmental, infrastructure, fiscal, economic, and social considerations. Its purpose is to take a factual, detached look at how a project or proposal has affected or will affect the public's interests.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of the study purpose and scope
- Identification, quantification, and assessment of one-time and recurring impacts
- Policy implications

Local Market Assessment

This is a study using a market area consisting of one locality. This study is conducted to determine a policy direction when a locality is focused both on meeting the housing needs that occur within its jurisdiction and attracting a share of regional housing demand.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of the study purpose
- Description of economic climate and trends, particularly as it relates to jobs and associated wage ranges available to residents of the locality
- Determination of the market area from which the locality can attract new residents
- Rental market analysis
 - Determination of existing and projected renter household population, by income category
 - Determination of available and pipeline supply, by rent level
- Homeownership market analysis
 - Determination of existing and projected homeowner household population, by income category
 - Determination of available and pipeline supply, by sale price
- Conclusions and recommendations

Marketing Plan

This is a plan detailing how to market a site for affordable housing development to potential developers, or to detail how developments will be advertised to tenants and/or homeowners. It outlines communication mediums, competition, budget, the action plan, evaluation, and target audience(s).

The following elements must be included in the final plan:

- Marketing goal
- Target markets
- Features/benefits of the subject development
- Marketing message(s)
- Marketing strategies
- Evaluation methods
- Budget

Needs Assessment

This is a housing market study that is focused on informing housing policy and therefore excludes elements geared toward pinpointing demand for a specific project proposal. Localities and advocacy groups use needs assessments to develop policies that will encourage the types and prices of housing most needed in the communities they serve.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of purpose
- Analysis of socioeconomic and demographic trends and geographic patterns
- Analysis of existing housing supply by type, tenure, and price
- Determination of supply gaps by type, tenure, and price
- Analysis of impediments to providing the needed supply

Policy Analysis

This is an enumeration and quantification of the costs, benefits, and overall effectiveness of an existing or proposed housing policy or series of policy alternatives that are intended to implement a desired goal. It is a systematic approach to determining whether a given policy is efficient and effective, or which of a series of policy options is likely to be the most efficient and effective, for the purpose of informing recommendations for new policies or improvements to existing policies.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of purpose
- Description of existing or proposed policy
- Description of policy analysis methodology
- Analysis of the existing or proposed policy to determine its effects, costs, and benefits
- If trying to frame multiple policy choices:
 - Description of policy alternatives
 - Analysis of the policy alternatives to determine likely effects, costs, and benefits
- Recommendation of a new policy or improvements to existing policy

Preliminary Architecture and/or Engineering Report

This report is focused on developing a physical program for a structure or parcel of land. A Preliminary Engineering Report typically assesses site topography and the condition of existing water, sewer, stormwater and other utility and infrastructure systems, highlights deficiencies, prioritizes infrastructure upgrades, recommends a solution or several alternative solutions, and estimates costs for the selected

improvements. Drawings typically show the location of the upgrades and schematic design solutions. A Preliminary Architectural Report assesses the condition of an existing building and sets forth a program for rehabilitation or adaptive reuse or designs a program for a new building. Conceptual building layouts and elevations are typical work products. Both engineering and architectural components can be combined into one report. Environmental assessment may be part of the scope of work but not the sole element.

These preliminary reports can be used as a basis to develop more detailed, bid-ready documents and can assist with development feasibility analysis.

The following essential elements must be included in the final report:

- Identification of programmatic needs
- Analysis of existing conditions.
- Identification of site and/or building opportunities and challenges
- Recommended design solutions, which may include several alternatives.
- Estimates of probable costs.

If appropriate, any or all of the above elements may be summarized in a schematic plan set in lieu of a written report.

Regional Market Assessment

This is a housing market study using a market area consisting of multiple localities. This study is typically conducted at the planning district commission level and is done to determine a regional policy agenda as well as agendas for the individual localities in the region.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of the study purpose
- Needs assessment, housing supply inventory, and housing conditions evaluation to quantify housing gaps by type and price
- Assessment of locality trends identified in the above step
- Analysis of barriers to filling housing gaps
- Community outreach (public meetings, interviews, focus groups, surveys)
- Recommendations for the region and each locality (e.g. policies, plans, funding requirements/sources, progress metrics)
- Evidence of buy-in from all localities in the region studied

Site Planning

This is the layout of infrastructure, landscaping, and building footprints on a parcel of land. This plan determines the character and extent of infrastructure on a site, setting forth the site improvements component of the development program. A site plan helps communicate an overview of the development and the feel of the outdoor realm it will create. Site planning projects may include analyses of existing conditions and potential solutions as necessary to shape the site plan itself.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan, as applicable to the site and project type:

- Existing and proposed topography, if the site is not level
- Existing and proposed property lines and easements
- Zoning setback lines
- Existing and proposed gas, water, and sanitary sewer mains
- Existing and proposed storm sewers and other stormwater management features

- Conceptual locations of electrical and telecommunications infrastructure, if known
- Existing and proposed streets, alleys, and sidewalks
- Proposed street, alley, and sidewalk cross-sections
- Existing and proposed parking lots
- Existing building footprints, and proposed if other than single-family
- Proposed trees and planted areas

Small Area Plan

This plan is for the future development of a defined subarea of a locality emphasizing affordable housing, including (at a minimum) analysis of existing conditions; goals, objectives, and policies; and a future land use map. This plan sets forth an agreed-upon vision for the development of an area and becomes a matter of public policy when adopted by the local governing body as part of its comprehensive plan.

The following essential elements must be included in the final plan:

- Explanation of purpose
- Definition of area boundaries
- Historical background of the area
- Existing conditions
 - Demographic profile
 - Assessment of existing physical conditions of housing, infrastructure, land use, and environment (include maps)
- Summary of public participation activities and what was learned
- Plan
 - Vision, goals, and objectives for the area
 - Future land use map
 - Illustrations to communicate development vision for the area
 - A proposed physical improvement program map
- Implementation
 - Recommended policy actions
 - Recommended capital improvements
 - Timeline and designation of responsible parties
- Appendices with pertinent background information

Title Search and/or Boundary Survey

This is a compilation of documentation examining the legal ownership of a property, history of events for a property (i.e. liens, judgments, etc.) and defining the boundaries of a specific property. A project may include either a title search or a boundary survey, or both.

The following essential elements must be included in the final product:

- Title Search: Records summary listing ownership(s), encumbrances, liens, and/or judgments with their current status
- Boundary Survey: Record plat defining the property lines of a parcel of land to include any easements or encroachments. Additional information may be included such as topography and items required to meet American Land Title Association (ALTA) standards.

7 Appendix B: Revitalization Area Information

Community Revitalization Plan Form Letter

General Instructions:

1. The Community Revitalization Plan Form should be signed by any of the following individuals or authorized officers of any of the following offices within the jurisdiction where the Development will be located:
 - City Manager/County Executive
 - Office of Housing
 - Office of Planning
 - Office of Zoning
 - Economic Development Authority
 - Local Housing Authority
 - Other official or office deemed acceptable by Virginia Housing
2. Owner/Applicant should fill in all requested information on the form letter, except for the signature page:
 - 'Development Address' should correspond to Development Address identified in the application.
 - 'Proposed Improvements' should correspond with Building and Improvements description in the application.
3. Authorized signer should complete and execute the signature page.

Community Revitalization Plan Form Letter

DATE: _____

TO: Virginia Housing
601 South Belvidere Street
Richmond, VA 23220

RE: Community Revitalization Plan Form

Name of Development: _____

Name of Owner/Applicant: _____

Name of Seller/Current Owner: _____

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

Development Address:

Proposed Improvements:

New Construction # Units _____ # Buildings _____ Total Floor Area _____

Adaptive Reuse # Units _____ # Buildings _____ Total Floor Area _____

Rehabilitation # Units _____ # Buildings _____ Total Floor Area _____

The Owner/Applicant listed above has asked this office to complete this form letter regarding the proposed Development described herein. This form letter will be used by Virginia Housing Development Authority for the sole purpose of determining whether the Development qualifies for Predevelopment Loan funding.

Accordingly, as indicated by my signature below, it is my opinion that the Development described above, as proposed to be constructed or rehabilitated, will utilize new or existing housing that conforms with the community's revitalization plan.

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Phone

Date

**RETURN THIS FORM TO THE OWNER/APPLICANT FOR INCLUSION IN THE
PREDEVELOPMENT LOAN APPLICATION.**